

Foreword

Occasionally, I get a get a story request. I received this message: "Have you ever thought about a story about a man surviving with his family or extended family during a crash of the economy and what would happen with the welfare folks and the gangbanger in the intercities. I'm just thinking out loud to one of my two favorite authors."

My reaction was to think it over and decide that it would be a perfect story. It would allow some latitude to address subjects I don't normally address in a significant way. The story may suggest prejudices which I may or not have, it's not important. I'm not out to put down respectable citizens regardless of their ethnic origin. The first settlers in California aside from the native tribes were Hispanics. Having led a sheltered life, I use the terms Latino and Hispanic interchangeably. Hispanic is used to refer to modern Spain, to the Spanish language, and to the Spanish-speaking nations of the world and particularly the Americas. A Latino is a person of Latin-American or of non-European Spanish-speaking descent. One has to be careful who one calls a wetback; they may have been here 150 years.

Much of the gang activity in this country focuses on two groups, African-Americans and Hispanics. That's just a sad fact. I have met a Crip and a member of MS-13. They're generally normal people outside their group. So, as requested, a sad tale of inner city life and the challenges one family faced. Their solution was totally politically incorrect.

Vendetta – Prologue

They lived in Los Angeles, specifically in the San Fernando Valley in a place named Panorama City. When they'd moved in, from out of state, they first lived in an apartment. Of note was the presence of an inordinately high number of Hispanic families in the complex. Over time, they realized that the entire area was predominately Hispanic.

In time they tired of the hassles associated with living in an apartment and bought a condominium not that far away, about a block. For the most part, the owners were typical middle class Caucasians, their kind of people. They fit in well during the early 1980s. Over time, the neighbor began to change; all of those vacant lots were filled by moving in apartment houses from different locations. This allowed the owner to charge what amounted to low rent. The homes filled to the brim with Hispanic families just trying to improve their lot in life.

As far as it went, that was fine. Unfortunately, the families brought their teenage sons and daughters. These sons and daughters were members of gangs that were experiencing a growth in population and soon the neighborhood was no longer safe. The property had been over priced and they couldn't get enough out of it now to pay off the loan, let alone buy a new house in a different area.

The man of the family, Tom, was a long term Life member of the NRA and liked firearms. He had a complete collection when they'd moved to Panorama City. Over time he added more. He didn't know he was a survivalist or prepper, he just knew that he liked his guns and liked to eat. The eating part was solved by shopping at the grocery stores, usually Ralphs, Fedco and Gemco.

They had the better part of a year's worth of food stored. This was earthquake country, one can never be too careful. At that point in his life Tom thought that having 1,000 rounds of rifle ammo for each rifle was adequate. He typically had 100 rounds of ammo for each of his handguns and shotguns. He thought little of the fact that he had almost 30 firearms, none was exactly alike. His idea of a main battle rifle was his Mini-14 which he had in stainless and blued.

However, Springfield Armory was formed and began marketing M1As patterned after the M14. Although Tom was a Vietnam Era Veteran, that was mostly happenstance. He'd been in the service when the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was issued, but had never seen a day of combat.

Tom bought a M1A and plenty of the 20 round magazines. He watched for sales of 7.62x51mm surplus ammo and bought all he could afford. He had ALICE gear for both Mini-14s and the M1A. If those gun stores on Parthenia Street sold hand grenades or LAW rockets, he'd have had some of those too. They did sell HK91s and HK93s, but he wasn't impressed. He should have been. It was well that he had a gun collection, California and the US changed the gun laws. The US laws were unreasonable and the California laws were unconscionable. By then, he had a Barrett rifle, the model 95.

When they moved to California, he called the LAPD and inquired if gun registration was required. In 1982, it wasn't. He only gave them one chance and they'd used it up. The laws changed and so did Tom, he got older and more set in his ways. Gemco and Fed-co locations were mostly sold to Target. But then came Wally World, Sam's Club and Costco.

Vendetta – Chapter 1

“I got a layoff notice from Disney.”

“With the economy in the state it’s in, why am I not surprised? At least we only have one child at home and she’s no child. I sure wish Los Angeles County would issue concealed carry permits.”

“What about your firearms?”

“That’s easy. The M1A has a flashhider with a bayonet lug, is semi-auto and had detachable box magazines, four points therefore illegal. Fifty caliber rifles are totally illegal too. The M1A 20 round magazines are illegal. That new Taurus I bought isn’t on the California list of approved handguns, hence illegal. That’s why I had to get him to buy it in Iowa and ship it to me one piece at a time labeled repair parts.

“The Mini-14s are both in Butler Creek folding stocks, have aftermarket flashhiders and a combination of both 30 round aftermarket and 20 round Ruger magazines. I don’t know if those 12 gauge flares are legal or not. I’m fairly sure those smoke flares we got in Texas and the flechette rounds we got in Oregon are both illegal. Only Winchester loads ammo for the .375 Winchester cartridge and it’s almost three bucks a round and special order. Enough of that, why did you get laid off?”

“Cost cutting move, the payroll will be done in Florida from now on.”

“Then, I doubt you will want to hear my news.”

“What?”

“Move over, we’ll both be on unemployment. I got a layoff too. Thank God we got the condo paid off early.”

“But, what will we do to eat? What about the utilities? Gas was \$2.939 this morning.”

“We have at least a year of food in the basement and garage. We’ll only drive when we go on job interviews. The unemployment will last us 26 weeks and if we’re careful, we can make it last a full year by not eating out.”

“I had to drive past a gang confrontation on the way home. I saw pistols and knives.”

“That’s it; from now on you’re carrying the Hi-Power. We’ll worry about the legalities about it if you have to use it to defend yourself.”

“I’ve never even fired it.”

“We’ll go to a range and get you familiar with it. Maybe I should load one of those two 870 riot guns and put it in a sock in your trunk.”

“Why not the Chief’s Special? I have a big purse and it could be overlooked.”

“If you’d rather, ok. Maybe I’ll load it with wadcutter.”

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That’s how it began, our illegally carrying concealed weapons. She had the model 36 and I had the Detective Special (third series). We both had 2 speed loaders filled with 158gr round nose bullets, but the revolvers were loaded with wadcutter rounds. Maybe carrying the revolvers gave us a certain air; we weren’t bothered for the longest time. But, this is the city, Los Angeles, and eventually we were forced to draw the guns in self-defense.

We were confronted in the parking lot at the Panorama Mall by some Hispanic kid with a 9mm (?) pistol. We both cleared leather and while I had him dead to rights, she let off a shot into the air before joining me and drawing down on him. He couldn’t even see the sights with the pistol laid on its side. He took off and we did too.

“That was terrifying.”

“He couldn’t even decide who to point that pistol at. We had him outnumbered 2:1. Let’s just hope he doesn’t live in our neighborhood.”

“Why did we get out of there so fast?”

“You want to try and explain your revolver? I don’t.”

Except, the kid did live in our neighborhood, his family lived in one of those converted apartments they’d moved into the neighborhood. And one day he saw us leaving the condo driveway, taking note of where we lived. From then on, it seemed like a scene from Death Wish 3 only I wasn’t Charles Bronson and nobody had a Browning 1919A4 or a .475 Wildey magnum. I had a Super Blackhawk in .44 magnum, if that counts.

As near as I could tell, both revolvers would handle +P rounds and we went with those after that; Winchester 125gr Super-X SJHP. It was nearly a buck a pop, so it was for tactical use only besides a single load at the range to get the feel. She thought it kicked too much so we swapped guns. After teaching her the difference in the cylinder release, she was set.

Like the idiot I was, I began carrying my 2½” Python in an IWB holster in the small of my back and the 4” Python in a belt holster with 8 speed loaders. Both were loaded with 158gr SJHP. I believe I was spoiling for a fight; a man has to feel safe in his own home. If you go looking for trouble, it’s bound to find you. I wore what some call a bush jacket,

longer than waist length and 4 pockets and complete with epaulets. I didn't fasten the belt or jacket and there were 4 speed loaders were in each lower pocket.

You've got to know that dressed as I was, I would get stares and comments. A group of punks, male and female, started to taunt me as I passed one of the houses. I stopped, turned around and asked, "Want to make something of it?"

That generated more taunts. I don't like being called Gringo, Anglo or some of the names they threw my way. I had the larger Python clear in a split second. The guy we had the run in with at Panorama Mall wasn't in this group, at least at this time. Then, using my left hand, I pulled the short barreled Python as well. If they were intimidated by a single gun, it was double so now. They scattered and off in the distance, I heard a siren. I beat feet for home and put up the revolvers. They must have seen me turn into the complex. Ten minutes later, someone was at the door, LAPD.

"Him, he's the one," some punk said.

"Do you have any handguns?"

"About 10 or 12, why?"

"Why do you need so many guns?"

"Because I like them; I don't need a reason, I have rights too called the 2nd Amendment."

"May we see them?"

"And if I say no, one of you will wait here while the other gets a search warrant, right?"

"Well..."

"Sure, come in, I have nothing to hide, you can't prove a thing."

The empty places in the pistol/revolver case had been filled with the Detective Special and the Chief's Special. There were no Pythons in evidence. They were in ziplock bags in a pail of oatmeal in the garage.

"Is this all you have?"

"Yeah, I keep them under lock and key just like required."

They then brought the punk into OUR home and showed him the pistol case. He shook his head and said, "Not there."

"Sorry about that, we had to check."

“I don’t think much of you taking a gangbanger’s word over something this serious. But since I have nothing to hide, I let you search. Next time, have a warrant.”

I knew a little about California law, very little. California has the Castle Doctrine, but you can’t shoot a burglar because of some stupid court case. And, you may only use equal force. If he/she has a knife you use a knife, ditto with a gun. I’m not sure if it covers ball bats.

California Penal Code § 198.5 sets forth that unlawful, forcible entry into one's residence by someone not a member of the household creates the presumption that the resident held a reasonable fear of imminent peril of death or great bodily injury should he or she use deadly force against the intruder. This would make the homicide justifiable under CPC § 197. CALCRIM 506 gives the instruction, "A defendant is not required to retreat. He or she is entitled to stand his or her ground and defend himself or herself and, if reasonably necessary, to pursue an assailant until the danger...has passed. This is so even if safety could have been achieved by retreating." However, it also states that "[People v. Ceballos] specifically held that burglaries which *do not reasonably create a fear of great bodily harm* are not sufficient *cause for exaction of human life*."

You could shave with my Rambo I and I think it’s bigger than Crocodile Dundee’s knife.

“What was that all about?”

“I took a walk around the neighborhood checking things out.”

“And...”

“A bunch of punks, I guess about 8, took exception to my bush jacket and started call me names. I ask them if they wanted to make something of it and they taunted me more. When I had enough, I pulled the Python from the belt holster and added the snub nosed from my IWB holster.”

“You’d better knock that off before you get into real trouble. What were you doing in the basement?”

“I was hiding my Pythons.”

“There aren’t many places down there to hide stuff.”

“You’d be surprised. I’ll bet you could look for a day and not find them.”

“You were out looking for trouble! That getup would get snickers from most people.”

“I’m not worried about most people, just the gangbangers and the cops.”

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A few weeks later, the guy I didn't vote for in the White House announced they were force to cut Medicaid temporarily. California already had problems and its bond rating had been reduced to B. He might be one heck of an actor, but he was having trouble being Governor. The state Assembly and the Senate refused to make the necessary budget cuts. It was a case where they were damned if they did and equally damned if they didn't. The White House declined aid.

We had the worst housing market in memory, the Fed having no ability to lower the interest rate any lower and nearly runaway inflation. Every time we went to the store, the price of bread was up a dime. That was the day old store; I have no idea what it was like at the grocery store. We'd dug into our supply of powdered milk and were eating it with our cereal, blah... The good news was that people must have enough ammo. The prices were starting to drop. But, we didn't have the money for any more ammo, or any LAW rockets or hand grenades.

"I'm thinking of selling my model 95 to raise money. Since they're illegal here, it's worth more. I figure with scope, the monopod and all the accessories I have, I could ten grand easy in a face to face off the books deal. The only thing holding me back is Henry Bowman."

"Who?"

"Henry Bowman, the main character in a book entitled *Unintended Consequences* by John Ross. See, the ATF goes to gun shows and watches someone buy a gun. Then they offer a lot more than he paid. If he sells it to them, they arrest him for selling a gun without a Federal Firearms License. I would be my luck to sell it to someone from the ATF."

"Tom, ten grand is a lot of money right now. Twelve would be even better."

"I don't even know if they allow gun shows in California, Jeanene."

"I found it. 'All firearms sales including private and gun show sales, transfers or loans, must go through a California licensed firearms dealer. An application for sale or transfer must be made with a licensed California gun dealer before any firearm may be sold or transferred.' I guess that means I keep the rifle."

"Doesn't it make you all warm inside breaking all of the California gun laws?"

"Not all of them, just most. Yeah, it does. Of course when we moved here, we weren't required to register all handguns within 60 days and Barrett rifles were legal. I bought the M1A, as it is, here in Los Angeles. So here we are with more illegal guns than in the LAPD arms locker and they used to be all legal. Face it; unless something changes with the economy, we aren't going to find jobs. Not when some pimple faced kid would be

happy with the same minimum wage job. The Cobra is about to run out on our insurance and then pray to Heaven that one of us doesn't get sick."

"What do you want to do?"

"Stir up some hate and discontent?"

"I thought we discussed that."

"We did, but only you agreed with you. I could care less. Frankly, if I thought I could get away with it, I'd clean up the neighborhood."

"What's holding you back?"

"I'd like to have a Mark II with an integral silencer and maybe a Surefire suppressor for my rifle."

"And they're illegal."

"Yeah, this is California, the land of fruits and nuts and everything is illegal. The real shame is that the suppressors are made here in LA."

"Where?"

"Fountain Valley; I have their 2009 catalog on my computer."

"What's the catalog say?"

"It says, *you can't afford me.*"

"Are there any advantages?"

"One, I can replace the flashhider with a California legal muzzle brake."

"And while you're borrowing the muzzle brake, you just happen to borrow a silencer?"

"I didn't say that."

"No, but you were thinking it."

"They can't arrest you for thinking."

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No, Tom, they can't. But where are you going to find a Mark II with integral suppressor? Steal one from the CIA? No, those aren't Rugers. The answer is Arizona, specifically

Phoenix. But, you know that, don't you? Remember the Mark IIs with the integral Ares suppressors you saw in the class III dealer in Scottsdale many years ago? Search Ares and good luck. Search Gem-Tech and look at their Oasis, it fits the bill. Costs a grand, but pull off your upper, swap the bolt and reassemble, even you can do that. Boise, Idaho, that's where. And, good luck, jails are houses with bars on the windows. But since you already have a Mark II, why not? The best part is that the barrel grooves won't match when you switch back. You go boy, rationalize all you want.

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This was going to take a lot of planning. Assuming they didn't work 3 shifts, they'd probably have a guard and an alarm system. Most alarm systems I was aware of communicated by two methods, direct wire, e.g. telephone, or radio. I tended to believe they'd use direct wire and all it would take to disable the system was cut the phone lines. Hey, I'm new at this burglary stuff. What I really needed was a factory tour, even if it omitted the silencer facility.

I called the customer service number I got and spoke to one Julie Roberts. I explained that I owned a large assortment their flashlights and was curious to see how they were made. She said they didn't have regular factory tours, BUT, it just so happened that some 8th graders from a school in Santa Ana was scheduled for a factory tour the next week and if I could put up with a bunch of 13-year-old students, I could tag along. She said to have the gate guard call her and she'd escort me and wait with me until the tour began.

She asked about my various lights and I started rattling off numbers and the firearms they were mounted on. The tour group showed up and we went seeing how they made flashlights. We were cautioned that the room label Tactical Division was off limits. I ask why and the tour leader said that that's where they made silencers and other tactical equipment. That gave me the information I needed, except for information on their security system. They worked 2 shifts and had guards and an alarm system for the third.

Our home alarm system was ADT (American District Telegraph) and hardwired. And, the frozen food company was J.R. Simplot. I found a place to get inside and located the telephone junction box. I thought it was a slam dunk. I didn't know that their system had a failsafe in case power and the phone lines went down. Because they were a class II manufacturer, loss of the phone line was treated as an alarm. I had all of the numbers marked down and the moment I got inside, I got what I wanted and a few spares.

I was passed the fence and pulling out when the squad car got near. I took the first side street and parked. I waited 4-5 hours before I moved on to my next task, Gem-Tech. I had to push and got there in time to call Jeanene. I explained that I ran out of gas and running a day later, but I'd allowed for car trouble. When the operator came on the line and said please deposit...I said, "I love you and hung up." J.R. Simplot didn't know who I was. And they hadn't called me to schedule an interview.

“That was quick, what happened?”

“They never heard of me (that was true), it had to be someone who thought it was all a sick joke.”

“Did you hear about the burglary at that company you mentioned?”

“I was on the road. What company?”

“Surefire?”

“Big deal?”

“KCBS didn’t say.”

“I got a chance to tour their flashlight section the day I left. I took I- 5 north to I-80 and switched to US 95 at Winnemucca. I went on the outskirts of Sacramento and through Reno. Ran out of gas north on 95 and had a bear of a time getting a ride back to Winnemucca. Once I got back, I had to turn around and fill up in Winnemucca. Then, when I showed up the next morning...well I told you about that Jeanene, it was a big waste of time and money.”

“Well, I got a job. Pays less, but is steady work in my chosen career field, Payroll.”

“Congratulations Jeanene; my wife, the CPP.”

“Not any more. I couldn’t find time to keep up the CEC requirements.”

“No biggie, we’ll both be retired in 10 years. I’ll keep looking, maybe something will turn up. Our food stores are getting dangerously low.

“What will you do in the meantime?”

“Cleaning up the neighborhood and taking out the trash.”

It was exactly correct but both tasks constituted double entendres. The final trigger was the drive by shooting in front of the apartment house where I ran into the kids. The dead guy was the same guy who tried to mug/rob us in the parking lot. They must have used an AK-47. Down in South Central, riots were in their beginning stages, which meant the LAPD would be very thin up here in the Valley.

In 2003, the city of Los Angeles changed the area's official name from South Central Los Angeles to South Los Angeles, hoping to blur collective memories of violence and blight. The name "South Central" had become almost synonymous with urban decay and street crime (it still is). Calling a cow a goat only changes the name; a cow is still a cow.

I cleaned and reloaded all of our weapons and loaded all magazines to full capacity. The 12 gauge shotguns were unloaded, cleaned and reloaded with 15-pellet 00 buck (3"). I dug out the Pythons and gave them a thorough cleaning and put on the belt holster and the IWB holster. I even put the model 36 in an ankle holster. Finally, I hung Rambo I inside the jacket hanging down from the sheath on my right side and the suppressed Ruger on the left side. Since the 4" Python was the most accurate, it would be my primary weapon followed by the snub nosed Python and then the model 36. Do you know how to tell a good gangbanger? They aren't breathing! Since they usually roamed in packs, I had to find the one isolated individual in the haystack.

Time is on my side, yes it is
Time is on my side, yes it is
(*Fallen*, 1998, music by the Rolling Stones)

I was angry; angry with the state, angry with the county and angry with the city. The state didn't seem to care who they gave free medical care to and they loved to take away your inalienable rights. The county because they wouldn't issue concealed weapon permits and the city because, well just because. If they couldn't fix the problem, I would do my best to solve it. I'd already committed at least two felonies just to get ready for the task.

Then, I got lucky about the time the unemployment ran out; I got a minimum wage job as a cashier in a gas station. Except, I didn't speak Spanish and the customers seemed to sense that. I checked into Rosetta Stone; John D. Rockefeller would need to take out a loan. And the actress (Lesley Ann Ortiz, née, Machado) doing the commercials didn't deliver your copy, only the sales pitch. Cuban who speaks perfect Spanish; so, she doesn't need the lessons. Figures.

To test my new bull barreled pistol, I drove up to the desert one Saturday and tried it out. It would cycle with Hi-velocity loads, standard velocity loads and with subsonic loads. With the latter, it was nearly as quiet as a new Hush Puppy and didn't wear put after a few rounds. They went all out to make it look like a bull barrel, including sights.

Ammo for the M1A would be a problem because I didn't hand load. Engle Ballistic Research loaded an 180gr match grade 7.62x51mm round they called the Thumper. They had a cheaper load for practice. Man, what a difference. It was just a shame that the rifle was so long and heavy. You couldn't hide that under your bush jacket.

Is there a difference between a vendetta and revenge? A vendetta is a feud while revenge is a dish best served cold, regardless of what the Klingons claim. Technically there is, but once the bullets start flying, would it make any difference? I needed to get a roll of friction tape and follow the instructions in *Unintended Consequences* to just keep my mouth shut. A vendetta is either: A feud between two families or clans that arises out of a slaying and is perpetuated by retaliatory acts of revenge; a blood feud or a bitter, destructive feud.

Revenge can be: The act of taking vengeance for injuries or wrongs; retaliation or, something done in vengeance; a retaliatory measure or, a desire for revenge; spite or vindictiveness or an opportunity to retaliate, as by a return sports match after a defeat. Strange each term is used to define the other.

Vendetta – Chapter 2

While I hadn't seen *V for Vendetta* or read the book, was the present situation all that far removed from the movie/book plot? Why does the thought *pop, pop, fizz, fizz* come to the forefront of my brain? Could someone actually pull off a stunt like this? Ask the Zodiac killer if you can find him, the cops couldn't. I think the answer is sometimes, providing you're never observed.

Of course there was more to it than simply remaining unobserved because the LAPD had seen most of my guns. I began research gunshot residue. Wiki said:

Gunshot residue (GSR) are principally composed of burnt and unburnt particles from the explosive primer, the propellant, as well as components from the bullet, the cartridge case and the firearm used. There are authors who use other definitions, such as cartridge discharge residue (CDR) or firearm discharge residue (FDR).

In 1971 Boehm presented some micrographs of GSR particles found during the examination of bullet entrance holes using a scanning electron microscope. If the scanning electron microscope is equipped with an X-ray microanalysis, the chemical elements present in such particles, mainly lead, antimony and barium can be identified.

In 1979 Wolten et al. proposed a classification of GSR following compositional criteria, morphology and size. Four compositions were considered "characteristic": lead, antimony and barium; barium, calcium and silicon; antimony and barium. The authors proposed some rules about the chemical elements which could also be present in these particles.

Wallace and McQuillan published a new classification of the GSR particles in 1984. They called "unique" particles the ones containing lead, antimony and barium, or the ones containing antimony and barium. Also for Wallace and McQuillan in these particles only some chemical elements could be present.

In the latest ASTM Standard Guide for GSR analysis by Scanning Electron Microscopy/Energy Dispersive X-ray Spectrometry particles containing lead, and, and respecting some rules related to the morphology and to the presence of other elements are considered characteristic of GSR. The most definitive method to determine if a particle is characteristic of or consistent with GSR is by its elemental profile. An approach to the identification of particles characteristic of or consistent with GSR is to compare the elemental profile of the recovered particulate with that collected from case-specific known source items, such as the recovered weapon, cartridge cases or victim-related items whenever necessary.

Particle analysis by scanning electron microscope equipped with an X-ray microanalysis can be the most powerful tool for forensic scientists to determine the proximity to a discharging firearm and/or the contact with a surface exposed to GSR (firearm, spent cartridge case, target hole), if proper attention is paid to avoid secondary gunshot residue

transfer from officers onto subjects or items to be tested for GSR, and to avoid contamination in the laboratories.

Hey, what ever happened to the nitrate test? I used to watch Quincy, ME and Robert Ito could make the scanning electron microscope sing. So, it was time to wear rubber gloves and easy to launder clothing, maybe the coveralls I always wore shooting. They had to be loaded with a little of everything. On the plus side, they were black. Add a black T-shirt, a balaclava, black gloves and black sneakers and I'd be set. Need some kind of blackout for where my eyes and mouth showed through the balaclava. But that wasn't the solution; I looked like a guy dressed up in black coveralls wearing a balaclava. I ended up with a Nomex racing coverall and a full set of racing gear all dyed in earth tones including shoes, socks, underwear, coverall and balaclava. Except I found a coverall made of 50% Nomex and 50% Kevlar.

Now, probably due to the colors, I couldn't be seen except under a street light. You only get one chance at something like this, until you gain a little experience. Thank God for DuPont. They said: "Normal home, commercial and industrial laundering and dry techniques are suitable. Because the flame-resistant protection is part of the aramid fiber it cannot be washed or worn out, even if the garment is mishandled. Recommended laundering procedures are available. Many companies consider industrial laundering programs to ensure their garments are thoroughly cleaned and properly maintained and to implement and manage their Protective Apparel programs."

Heck, run it through the cleaners and let them launder it. They really get things clean. When I had everything ready, I decided to give it a trial run, without a weapon; if I could sneak around those gangbangers without getting caught, so much the better. I spent an hour in the shadows listening to their gibberish before returning home. The next run would be for real and I kept telling myself, "Don't puke. For God's sake, whatever you do, don't puke." DNA evidence will convict you now that Johnnie Cochran is dead.

My goal was 'one shot, one kill', two if I could get away with it. Then, I'd scoot home, put the clothes in the laundry bag, swap out and conceal the suppressed upper. A splash of Hoppe's #9 and I'd be good to go. Get a shower, crawl in bed and let the sleeping pill do its magic.

A war plan never survives first contact with the enemy. Right? Wrong! It was pop, pop and scoot. I made certain no one saw me. I came in via the garage door and did the thing with the gun. Then I shucked the clothes and put them in the laundry bag. I put on my robe and went upstairs.

"Where have you been?"

"In the basement and the garage."

"Didn't you hear me calling for you?"

"I'm getting hard of hearing, what did you need?"

"Nothing now, I took care of it. Say do you have any idea what all the sirens are about?"

"I couldn't hear them in the basement. I'll look out the bedroom window and see if I can tell."

"You sure seem to be in a good mood."

"Yes, I am. Not making much at that new job, but with both of us working, we're starting to fill in our preps."

"Is that what you were doing?"

"Yep, the inventory is current."

The next morning I dropped off the clothes at the cleaners and ask to have them before closing. They advertised one hour dry cleaning and one day laundry but it was extra to get the one hour dry cleaning or same day laundry. I told them the articles were 50-50 Kevlar and Nomex and, no starch.

So, I'm taking the money and setting the switches to dispense gas when in walk two of LA's finest, all smiles and flashing badges. Could I talk to them?

"I can after work, but as you can see, I'm awfully busy at the moment. What's up?"

"What time do you get off work?"

"Around five. Want to come back or should I meet you?"

"Could you meet us at the Van Nuys station around five thirty? Here's my card, ask for me."

"Sure, what's this about?"

"We'll explain later."

"See ya."

I'd seen the news coverage at the LA Daily News website. I also checked KCBS and read their article. Absent any guilty knowledge, I could relate to what I'd read. I had checked ex post facto laws on Wiki, just in case, at the time thinking about my unregistered guns.

It is unlawful for any person to own, possess, lend, manufacture, import, sell, or offer to sell any short-barreled shotgun or short-barreled rifle, any firearm that is not immediate-

ly recognizable as a firearm, any camouflaging firearm container, any cane or wallet gun, any undetectable firearm, any ammunition that contains or consists of a flechette dart, any bullet that contains or carries an explosive agent, any zip gun, any unconventional pistol, any multiburst trigger activator, any nunchaku, any metal knuckles, any belt buckle knife, any leaded cane, any lipstick case knife, any cane sword, any shobi-zue, any air gauge knife, any ballistic knife, any shuriken, any writing pen knife, and any metal military practice hand grenade or metal replica hand grenade. It is unlawful for any person to carry a concealed dirk or dagger. I couldn't find the handgun registration requirement, but it was there, somewhere.

"Help You?"

"I'm here to see this guy," I said handing him the business card."

"Please have a seat, he'll be right out."

Yeah, like 20 minutes later. I was about to leave when he came and got me and led me to what I presumed was an interrogation room.

"Did you hear about the shooting last night in your neighborhood?"

"I was in the basement and when I came up, the wife mentioned it. I looked out the bedroom window and saw the red lights. I read KCBS and the Daily News this morning."

"According to our file, you allowed officers to check you firearms a while back; is that correct?"

"Why not, I didn't do anything even though that punk said I did. They seemed satisfied and left. I told them that if they came back get a warrant."

"Are your handguns registered?"

"No, I never bought any handguns in California. The law was ex post facto as far as I'm concerned."

"Do you have or have you ever owned a Colt Python?"

"Wait a minute, what about my rights? Am I free to leave?"

"We'd rather you answer just a few more questions."

"I know about Miranda. I think this constitutes a custodial situation even though I'm not under arrest. I won't say anything else until you get me the free lawyer."

"No, you can go, for now,"

I registered all of the handguns using forms I got from Turner's. Eighteen dollars per; except, I don't have any Pythons. Yeah right. They're hiding in the oatmeal, again. The upper is somewhere else and you'll probably (he said with his fingers crossed) never find it.

I let things cool off a couple of weeks then went hunting a second time. Now they were all huddled up in a tight little group. None of them went anywhere without at least two companions. I think maybe some of those girls have guns too. I'd better wait and see; it will keep. I had a plan, you see, create a Vendetta as in a feud between two families or clans (gangs) rises out of a slaying and is perpetuated by retaliatory acts of revenge. Although we didn't have a lot of blacks in Panorama City, there was Pacoima a mile up Van Nuys Boulevard.

Now, what do you think would happen if some guys screaming Spanish at the top of his lungs shot a black man in Pacoima? Something simple like a Spanish curse. Well, other people pronounce it different. Might work, might not, but it would be one heck of a fireworks show. Not all drive-by shootings occur in South Central. But, like I said, I'd better wait and see, revenge is a dish best served cold.

The other thing I had to consider was my choice of a firearm. Most of the gangbangers liked 9mm handguns. I had a Hi Power, so that wasn't the problem. The problem would be the full metal jacket bullet that would stay together and reveal barrel scratches unless it went through and through. That only happens when you don't want it to, not when it's desired. Buy a gun on the street? *Esse, you gotta gun for sale?* Right.

Maybe I could find that one lone Hispanic and steal his gun. I could even shoot him to cover up the theft. I wonder what effect that would have on the Hispanic gangs. Would they assume it was one of the groups from Pacoima? That could work in my favor.

I waited a full week before I dressed in my Ninja suit and went stalking. I found this guy with the suspicious bulge in his waist band and pop, pop. I grabbed the gun, a CZ, and scooted back home, again entering by the garage. I was in the shower when the LAPD showed up and no, thank you, they wouldn't wait. I toweled off, put on my underwear, my jeans and pulled a T-shirt over my head.

"What?"

"We need you to come with us."

"Am I under arrest? What charge? Is it cold out? Will I need a coat?"

The answers were no, none, no and yes. I stuck my hand out the door to find out how heavy a coat I would need. Bush jacket weather; and, since I was as pure as the driven snow, I'd milk it. They were polite enough; let me sit in the back all by myself and no handcuffs. Handcuffs would imply I was under arrest, I read the book. I planned on being indignant when they got me to the Van Nuys station. Pull me out of the shower

would you? I'd been in the basement and garage updating our supplies inventory and the spreadsheet was still up on my computer. We had been to Ralph's over the weekend and done some shopping. I needed to add what we bought and subtract what we used. China is going to attack any day now!

"Thank you for coming in."

"I had a choice? I want a lawyer. They let me ride in the back of their car and I found out I was locked in. That's a custodial situation in my book."

"What were you doing this evening?"

"Is that a trick question? I know how it works, I answer one little question and can't stop talking after that."

"You can talk freely until we read you the Miranda warning. Do you know what that is?"

"Book, chapter and verse."

"The only time we could use a statement against you were if you were to come in and voluntarily confess."

"Too what, updating my computer inventory of my supplies?" (Oops)

"You were doing that last time."

"I suppose, I do it weekly."

"Would you consent to a search of your home?"

"You got your freebie, get a warrant."

"Do you have something to hide?"

"No just no but hell no. Besides, you'll detain me until you have the warrant, won't you?"

"You just wait and we'll get the officers to take you home."

Right and while I'm waiting like forever, they got the warrant. I don't know what they used for probable cause, but I was ready for them, I got the return documents from the CA DOJ covering my handguns. So they search and I produce the DOJ documents and they leave my handguns alone. The M1A with the muzzle brake really looks like the CA legal version.

"That's not the Springfield Armory muzzle brake."

When I bought the gun, you didn't need one. I got that Surefire Fast Attach muzzle brake and installed it myself to comply with the law. And, after your guys saw my handguns, I realized I needed to register them. One hundred eighty dollars to comply with an ex post facto law!

"Are these all of your firearms?"

"Yeah, they're locked up aren't they? You got the warrant, look. But if you start dismantling the walls I'm going to sue for damages! Get ground penetrating radar and search the walls that way. Just what are you looking for?"

"A suppressor."

"Right, I got mine at Gemco or was that Fedco? Everything that's fun to own is illegal in this stupid state!"

"Are you a survivalist?"

"I'm not out to overthrow what's his face in the White House." (Don't go there, watch your body English.)

"McCain or Paul?"

"McCain, I liked her looks."

"You mean Palin, right?"

"Well McCain ain't no spring chicken, just a war hero. Didn't figure they win when he picked her, but I had high hopes."

"Frank Sinatra, *A Hole in the Head*, 1959."

"Hey that's right. Owned a hotel in Miami or somewhere."

"You a movie fan?"

"Not lately."

"I know what you mean. Anyway, these are all of your firearms?"

"That's what I said. I also said that you have the warrant so search all you want."

"It suddenly dawned on me, if they checked my dirty laundry, oh, oh."

"I did your laundry while you were gone."

“Thanks Jeanene.”

“Do you do laundry at night?”

“I just got a new job and I do it every chance I get. I did his work clothes while he was gone.”

You know, if she wasn't already married, I'd marry her. It was all the same color and she did it all on the permanent press cycle.

“That's it, we didn't find anything.”

I knew they wouldn't find the silencer but wasn't sure about the Barrett or the CZ. Apparently they didn't like oatmeal and didn't detach the gun case from the wall and find the Barrett stored between the gun case and wall. Sometimes you have to bluff. Two down and one to go and hopefully I'd trigger the Vendetta.

The thing about Vendettas is that once started they have a life of their own. Eventually, they kill each other off or Arnold would bring in the California National Guard and settle the question. I could sit back and watch the news and be thankful for my minimum wage job. Bush senior declared a National Emergency during the Rodney King Riots and we got troops. On the fourth day, 4,000 Soldiers and Marines arrived from Fort Ord and Camp Pendleton to suppress the crowds and restore order. Posse Comitatus be damned.

*Bad boys, bad boys
Whatcha gonna do, whatcha gonna do
When they come for you
(Repeat)*

It wasn't so much about prejudice as it was about having safe streets to walk on. I couldn't fix the economy, had to leave that to the big boys. But, I could do my part in making the streets safe. Initially the thought had been to just kill a few of them, undetected, and make 'em worry. That overlooked the gang mentality. One person, alone, might act differently than they did when they were with other members of their gang.

The term herd mentality is derived from the word “herd,” meaning group of animals, and “mentality,” implying a certain frame of mind. However the most succinct definition would be: how large numbers of people act in the same ways at the same times. Herd behavior is distinguished from herd mentality because it applies to all animals, whereas the term “mentality” implies a uniquely human phenomenon. Herd mentality implies a fear-based reaction to peer pressure which makes individuals act in order to avoid feeling “left behind” from the group. Herd mentality is also a part of “mob mentality.” It is a topic under the psychology of the aggressor in an “aggressor- bystander” situation. One example of herd mentality in this last context was when once a man was beating his wife in Central Park, New York, and eventually killed her. A crowd had gath-

ered but no one did anything about him since no one else was doing anything about him.

Don't you love the internet and Wiki? You don't even have to know the correct term. I used mob mentality and got the above paragraph that described the mentality and behavior I was talking about. It was close enough to make my point. The danger lay in the behavior spilling over like it did in '65 or '92. When that happened, those involved trashed their own neighbors and when enough people were hurt, soldiers were brought in to quell the disturbance.

The underlying philosophy was, *if you can't beat 'em, get 'em to fight each other*. I had to join the big leagues to pull it off, as in 187PC, but so far no one could prove a thing. Plus, I could dispose of those awful un-American suppressors and be down to a single firearms violation. It was not for the faint of heart, this road I'd embarked upon. Assume they never found the upper, they had no forensic evidence, I even made an improvised brass catcher because I didn't know about case identification when it came to .22 rim-fires. It's not that far to the Pacific Ocean.

o

Joe Friday or whatever his name was, it wasn't Mark Fuhrman, seemed to think I was behind it. Ok, prove it. We all know OJ did it, but the glove didn't fit and if the glove don't fit, you must acquit (erroneous quote, correct quote "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit")! A hint, both suppressors were in the garage, and you still can't find them. I'm as serious in making that statement as a heart attack. I told you where the Pythons were so I know you could find them, in time; there are only so many pails of oatmeal (2).

I waited three weeks before the next and hopefully final step, retaliating against a African-American gang member in Pacoima for the murder of two Hispanic gang members. I need that long to figure out the CZ-75 that wasn't California compliant. Rather like a Browning Hi-Power, it just needed a good cleaning and I wore latex gloves. Used the dead guy's ammo, it had a full magazine. I planned to stage a drive by and yell that Spanish curse. Had to steal some non-descript car (grand theft auto) and abandon it and the pistol for LAs finest to find. Friction tape, just in case. And then, sit back and watch the movie.

I told Jeanene that I had to do the inventory again and she said she'd watch the news. Can't put anything over on her, but I'm not sure if she thinks I burgled Surefire and Gem-tech. Probably the first but not the second, it wasn't widely reported. The BATFE was investigating along with the FBI. Same was the thing with Surefire, both agencies. I'd have to dispose of both of them, even if it broke my heart. Especially the Oasis, it was super quiet with the sub-sonic rounds. I should have stolen two, one to use and one to keep.

I found a car with the keys in the ignition, running no less, and headed north on Van Nuys. I turned into the area where the alleged gangbangers were and found a group

milling around in front of an apartment building. Two shots and I was speeding away. Ditched the car on the other side of the street from where I'd taken it. Eased on home, ditched the balaclava, got my bush jacket and waited for LAPD.

They didn't show up! So we turned the TV to channel 9 and watched the news. It was an hour before the story broke so we switched to KCBS and watched the real news. KCBS and KCAL-9 are affiliated so they exchange information. The guy wasn't dead, just wounded, but they were calling it a gang related shooting, speculating that it might have been in retaliation for two homicides in our area.

"You're trying to start a, oh what's the word?"

"Vendetta."

"Yes, vendetta. You'll never get away with this. How many times have they pulled you in?"

"At least twice, but the glove didn't fit."

"And those people going through our things, it was embarrassing."

"Thanks again for washing my clothes."

"I know nothing."

"There ya go. Might be a good idea to not learn anything either. The Pythons are in the oatmeal and you can turn me in to protect yourself. I didn't register them. As to anything else I may or may not have, nobody can find it unless they know exactly where to look."

"So are you trying to start another riot?"

"I hope it doesn't go beyond the gangs attacking each other. The previous riots were pretty much confined to Watts, although they did move to Parker Center in '92."

"You may have started something that can't be stopped. There are so many Latino gangs here in the Valley and very few African-American gangs."

"They can recruit help from South Central."

Vendetta – Chapter 3

I had grossly overestimated the capacities of the LAPD and underestimated the capacities of the various Los Angeles gangs. Open gang warfare broke out and more than once I was tempted to try and grab an AK-47 or some American hand grenades. The classic American vendetta was the Hatfield's and McCoy's. But I stayed out of it and eventually lost my job at the service station in Pacoima when it became too difficult to keep the station open.

We went out of our way to avoid known locations where gang violence was present, even as far as only using one of the two exits from the condo complex. There were two streets, Sylmar Avenue and a short street, a continuation of Sylmar connecting to Tupper. That short street was avoided at all costs. Our street, Moonbeam Avenue, connected to Gledhill on the north and Liggett on the south, forming a square circle. Liggett Elementary School was in the center.

A bad school when we moved, it had gotten steadily worse. The thing that irked me was their teaching English as a second language to 5th and 6th generation American Hispanic children who still spoke only Spanish at home. How had their parents gotten through school? Had they even gone to school? Actually, they spoke English, but didn't speak it at home, relying on the LAUSD to do the task, your tax dollars at work.

The north side of our condo complex exited on Woodman Avenue. It was explained that had they put the mailboxes on the north side, our address would have been Pacoima instead of Panorama City. That upped the property values considerably. Moving in those apartments had lowered them even more. I think that happened in '86, memory point the Challenger Disaster.

Jeanene got a pay raise and promotion, but the only jobs I could find were pumping gas. It was hard starting over when you're 58. It is pure age discrimination, but you can't prove it. You're only good for maybe 8 years before retirement and they aren't hiring for 8 years. You know when they say, *over qualified*.

On a side note, I should point out that the suppressors I got didn't have serial numbers which I presume each should have. Either I was wrong or I managed to get them before the serial numbers were applied. Like I said, I should have gotten two in Boise. I have no grudge against either blacks or Hispanics, just some of them and that's based on experience. I don't like gangs, period! If *Gangland* is to be believed, there must be 100,000 or more distributed among the large cities.

A gang war is never pleasant because some innocent bystanders end up getting hurt. Ask yourself what they're doing being a bystander in the first place. What about that beating in Central Park? What if that perp had a gun instead of his fists? People just stand around and lollygag when they have no business just standing there. But, this is California and they have laws limiting the extent to which you can protect yourself.

You can't have a .50 caliber rifle, but how many .50 caliber rifles have been used in crimes? How many legally register handguns in the hands of their owners have been used in crimes? None and not many. Ronnie Barrett sure told the LAPD, didn't he?

December 11, 2002

Via Facsimile (213) 847-0676 and US Mail

*Chief William J. Bratton
Los Angeles Police Department
150 North Los Angeles Street
Re: LAPD 82A Rifle, Serial No. 1186
Point of Contact: Jim Moody
213 485 4061*

Dear Chief Bratton,

I, a US citizen, own Barrett Firearms Mfg. Inc., and for 20 years I have built .50 caliber rifles for my fellow citizens, for their Law Enforcement departments and for their nation's armed forces.

You may be aware of the latest negative misinformation campaign from a Washington based anti-gun group, the Violence Policy Center. The VPC has, for three or so years, been unsuccessful in Washington, D.C. trying to demonize and ban a new subclass of firearms, the .50 caliber and other "too powerful" rifles. This type of nibbling process has been historically successful in civilian disarmament of other nations governed by totalitarian and other regimes less tolerant of individual rights than the United States.

The VPC's most recent efforts directs this misinformation campaign at your state, attempting to get any California body to pass any law against .50 caliber firearms. In March 2002 the VPC caused the California State Assembly, Public Safety Committee to consider and reject the issue by a 5 to 0 with 1 abstaining vote.

Regrettably, the same material has been presented to your city council. I personally attended the council meeting in Los Angeles regarding attempts to bar ownership of the .50 caliber rifle in your city. I was allowed to briefly address the council. The tone of the discussion was mostly emotionally based, so the facts that I attempted to provide were ineffective to the extent they were heard at all. The council voted to have the city attorney draft an ordinance to ban the .50, and further, to instruct the city's representatives in Sacramento and in Washington DC to push for bans at their respective levels.

At that council meeting, I was very surprised to see an LAPD officer seated front and center with a Barrett 82A1 .50 cal rifle. It was the centerpiece of the discussion. As you know, there have been no crimes committed with these rifles, and most importantly, current California law does not allow the sale of the M82A1 in the state because of its detachable magazine and features that make it an "assault weapon." This rifle was being deceptively used by your department. The officer portrayed it as a sample of a currently

available .50 cal rifle, available for sale to the civilians of Los Angeles. One councilman even questioned how this rifle was available under current laws, but as I stated, facts were ineffective that day.

Your officer, speaking for the LAPD, endorsed the banning of this rifle and its ammunition. Then he used the rifle for photo ops with the Councilmen each of whom, in handling the firearm, may have been committing a felony. I was amazed.

Since 1968, with the closing of the US Springfield Amory, all of the small arms produced for the various government agencies are from the private sector. Every handgun, rifle or shotgun that law enforcement needs comes from this firearms industry. Unless the City of Los Angeles has plans of setting up its own firearms manufacturing, it may need to guard the manufacturing sources it has now.

When I returned to my office from Los Angeles, I found an example of our need for mutual cooperation. Your department had sent one of your 82A1 rifles in to us for service. All of my knowledge in the use of my rifle in the field of law enforcement had been turned upside down by witnessing how your department used yours. Not to protect and serve, but for deception, photo opportunities, and to further an ill-conceived effort that may result in the use of LA taxpayer monies to wage losing political battles in Washington against civil liberties regarding gun ownership.

Please excuse my slow response on the repair service of the rifle. I am battling to what service I am repairing the rifle for. I will not sell, nor service, my rifles to those seeking to infringe upon the Constitution and the crystal clear rights it affords individuals to own firearms.

I implore you to investigate the facts of the .50, to consider the liberties of the law-abiding people and our mutual coexistence, and to change your department's position on this issue.

Sincerely,



*Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc.
Ronnie Barrett, President*

*June 30, 2003
Chairman, Public Safety Committee
State of California
Sen. Bruce McPherson
Via: Fax (916) 445-4688*

Dear Senator McPherson,

United States defense contractors such as Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc., Murfreesboro, TN USA rely on orders from the US Military as a primary source of income but this government income for most contractors is only part of the necessary income for long term survival. Commercial or civilian product sales are also a main source of income that makes payroll and for good working conditions for their employees. We must support these defense contractors in both peace and war and allow them to operate, market and sell their products under the rules, regulations and law of the Federal Government. There is a balance of customers among defense contractors that is necessary for sound, long term business and by eliminating commercial sales in California this balance is disrupted. To vote against .50 cal rifles puts jobs of your constituents at risk, the lives of your police at risk, and in the end the safety of the State of California at risk. Are you willing to jeopardize this?

The defense industrial base in America is at risk of being unable to fully support our country in time of need without adequate opportunity for commercial sales of various products. In the Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc. situation the civilian legal Barrett .50 cal rifle is at risk in the state of California. The attempt to ban a legal firearm not only violates the basic principles of the US Constitution but sets a precedence that endangers many vital defense contractors. In the Barrett case it also endangers California law enforcement agencies from having a proven and important tool in the fight against terrorism.

** W. Hays Parks, Special Assistant to the Judge Advocate of the US Army wrote: "The M82A1 Barrett... are manifestations of the important historic cooperation played by private citizens and small business in the United States in the development of weapons and munitions necessary for the US Armed Forces to perform their mission to protect the national security interests of the United States by fighting and winning, with as few friendly casualties as possible." This statement sums up the vital role both government and commercial business play in the sound business practices of various defense contractors of which Barrett is one.*

The Barrett .50 cal rifle was ascertained by the troops on the front lines in Iraq as the best performing small arm and they have the private defense contractor to thank for that weapon. Ban .50 cal rifles in California and you take this tool from your police also. The war on terror is not over! The Barrett .50 cal rifle has been in the hands of competitive shooters, hunters, and collectors for over 20 years and is a mainstay of the long range competitive shooters matches. It also serves on Police SWAT teams as the primary long range anti-sniper weapon.

It is the Barrett position that we choose not to support in anyway state or local governments who are against the US Constitution and the safety and security of this nation. If California were to ban the sale of the Barrett .50 cal rifle we will stop the sale and service of all Barrett products to all State Law Enforcement agencies of the state of California immediately and ask all small arms manufactures to consider similar action. Re-classify the .50 cal rifle and you align yourself and the State of California as being part of the very terrorists who are attempting to destroy this great nation of ours.

Please vote against banning or re-classifying .50 cal rifles.

Respectively,



Ronnie G. Barrett

President

Barrett Firearms Mfg., Inc.

Murfreesboro, TN USA

** Quoted from: Memorandum for Staff Judge Advocate, US Army Special Forces Command, (Airborne), Fort Bragg, NC Sept 7, 1999*

By ROSE FRENCH

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – When US soldiers need to penetrate a tank's armor from long-distance, they count on a weapon that evolved from garage tinkering by a former wedding photographer. (Editor's Note: The original version of this story misstated the distance at which the weapon can penetrate tank armor.)

The .50-caliber rifle created by Ronnie Barrett and sold by his company, Barrett Firearms Manufacturing Inc., is the most powerful that civilians can buy. It weighs 30 pounds and can hit targets up to 2,000 yards away with armor-piercing bullets.

That kind of power has drawn gun enthusiasts, Hollywood actors and Barrett's most loyal buyer, the US military, which has been buying Barrett's rifles since the 1980s and using them in combat from the 1991 Gulf War to the present.

But the powerful gun has drawn plenty of critics, who say the rifle could be used by terrorists to bring down commercial airliners or penetrate rail cars and storage plants holding hazardous materials.

For years state and federal lawmakers have sought to limit or ban the gun's sale, as California did this year.

Tom Diaz, a senior policy analyst with the Washington-based Violence Policy Center, says the guns should be more regulated and harder to buy. The gun can now be bought by anyone 18 or older who passes a background check.

"They're easier to buy than a handgun," Diaz said. "These are ideal weapons of terrorist attack."

Barrett started tinkering after taking photos of a .50-caliber Browning machine gun in the early 1980s. The heavy recoil of the Browning made it nearly impossible to shoot without being solidly mounted, but Barrett's rifle reduces recoil to the point where it can be

shoulder-fired, while the weapon rests on a bipod. (Editor's Note: The original version of this story misstated the relationship between the Browning and Barrett's own gun.)

The majority of Barrett's sales come from military orders, for armed forces and police departments in about 50 allied countries. Every branch of the US military uses the rifles, and the Department of Defense last year spent about \$8 million on his firearms. The New York City Police Department recently announced its training officers would use the rifles.

Barrett estimates about 1,000 of his rifles – which each cost between \$3,500 and \$10,000 – have been used in the 1991 Gulf War and the current war in Iraq.

The guns owned by civilians are used mostly for hunting big game and in marksman-ship competitions.

Other manufacturers now make the gun, but Barrett dominates the market. He employs 80 at his 20,000-square-foot gun-making facility in Murfreesboro, about 30 miles south-east of Nashville.

He said sales are up nearly \$6 million from last year.

Reports have observed the rifles have made their way to terrorists, drug cartels and survivalists.

Joseph King, a terrorism expert at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, said terrorists could use the weapon to take out a plane.

"I don't understand any civilian use of it," King said. "The only thing it's good for is for military or police application. You can't really hunt with it because it would destroy most of the meat."

However, Bryce Towsley, a Vermont-based gun writer, said that when the rifle is used with the proper bullet for hunting, it would not destroy game meat. (Editor's Note: The original version of this story did not include Towsley's statement.)

It never hurts to review history because those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. That bears repeating, over and over and over, just like what Clint Eastwood said, *Improvise, Adapt, Overcome*.

Ask yourself how many of the gangbangers had .50 caliber rifles. None, a 9mm was more compact and weighed a whole lot less. For that matter, so did the M-16s and AK-47s they had. If they actually had hand grenades, they didn't use them. The Colt M-16s were imported from El Salvador where they had been purchased on street corners for about two hundred each. The grenades were cheaper, three bucks. Strangely, the fighting didn't escalate, although it was ongoing. Back and forth, forth and back. No

more wounded either; it's pretty hard to survive 20-30 shots center mass without a very good vest. They didn't have those, another illegal item in the People's Republic.

Actual it would be easier to tell you what is legal rather than what is illegal, it's the shorter list. Only handguns on the approved list were permitted and no rifles on the disapproved list were allowed to be sold by California guns dealers. That's why my PT1911 came from Iowa, one piece at a time. The original M1911 didn't even make the approved list, no ambidextrous safety. One Python was listed; it was stainless and had a 6" barrel. A Python is the Cadillac of .357 magnum revolvers.

I didn't go for the full autos because they were too big to effectively hide and the diameter of the grenades exceeded the diameter of my hiding place. We watched the 11:00 news trying to keep a body count and failed miserably. I apparently knew how to start a vendetta, but didn't have a clue how to turn it off. It had to be about God's sense of humor. This time I ended up pumping gas at an Arco station on Roscoe Boulevard, about a block from the Black Angus restaurant; which, of course, we couldn't afford in our present circumstance.

Due to increased patrols and flooding the area with 2 man cars, the LAPD eventually brought the situation back to something resembling normal. I was tempted to fuel the fire although I figured I'd about used up my luck and if I kept it up, would end up getting caught. So I wised up and called it even, until the next time we went to Panorama Mall. She had the Chief's Special with wadcutters and I was carrying the Detective's Special, illegally. We went in, did our shopping and headed back to the car. This time, she was in and I was getting in after putting the packages in the trunk when this punk comes along and announces a carjacking. He had a knife, we both had guns.

Remember the line, "You call that a knife? This is a knife!" Except Rambo I was bigger than Mick's. Equal force, you may only use equal force. He stabbed at me with the stiletto, I slashed with Rambo. Fortunately he didn't bleed out before the Paramedics got there. Unfortunately, I had sharpened the false edge on top razor sharp too. We know where I ended up, Van Nuys station, charge with carrying a double edged knife. I suppose I forgot to mention that, those double edged boot knives that were popular a few years back were now illegal.

There was no way I was going to get out of this one because I knew they were illegal. They took the knife, probably as evidence, and let me go. Do you have any idea how far it is from the Van Nuys station back to the condo? Six miles. They did give me a word of advice. Since I apparently had so many illegal weapons, I'd better go through them and dispose all the illegal ones.

I'd paid dearly for the Pythons and they weren't going anywhere. The same thing went for the Barrett 95. The silencers were where they couldn't be found and we made a trip to Solvang to replace the Rambo. The knife shop carried Randall knives and he had a 7" model 2 for \$350. He could sell the knife but you couldn't carry it. It was high on my list and between us we came up with the cash. Told him my name was John Cash, no

relation. I've long had this rebellious streak when you say no, I go buy one. \$350 plus 8.75% tax brought the total to \$380.63.

I got a 25¢ per hour raise to Jeanene's \$150 per month raise. One Saturday I decided to take the Barrett up to the desert and run a few rounds through it. I removed screws securing the brackets securing the wall and pulled out the rifle case. I took it and 30 rounds of ammo up to somewhere east of Palmdale past Pear Blossom. After finding a suitable location with a good backstop, I used those 30 rounds and it was still right on the money.

When I got home, there were 4 squad cars parked by the south entrance so I parked on the street. They were back a second time with another search warrant and I was beginning to feel harassed. They had a metal detector this time and covered every square inch of walls and found nothing that couldn't be seen through the glass doors on my gun cases. So I set on the sofa and fumed. Keep in mind that the double edged knife was only illegal carry, not to own unless it was a switchblade.

Eventually Joe Friday or whoever he was showed up and started to ask questions. I gave him my name, address, date of birth and the minimum they have a right to ask and then refused to answer any more questions.

"What are you trying to hide?"

(silence, I figured I must have done a good job of hiding the stuff)

"What would you say if I told you we have evidence linking you to the first two murders?"

(silence, anything you say can and will be used against you; worst answer, what evidence?)

"Why don't we continue this at the station?"

"Am I under arrest?"

"No."

"I'll pass." (don't voluntarily put yourself into a custodial situation without an attorney present, your refusal can't be construed as an admission of guilt)

"Do you own a suppressor?"

(silence, actually no, but I have two stolen ones in the garage)

"Do you have any other illegal weapons?"

(silence, other? use your 5th amendment right only don't enumerate it, except when under oath to avoid a perjury charge; a lie when not under oath is simply a lie, under oath, it's a felony)

"Why won't you cooperate with the police?"

(silence, the answer would take all night)

They actually did look behind the gun case but the Barrett was in the car parked on the street about a block away. I discovered that they had almost found the suppressors because the nut was striped. I'm glad I used Loctite. It meant I had to remove the nut with Vise grips and a crescent wrench, but it did work.

Sometime before we bought the condo, the garage door opener had broken. The long tray or whatever had been replaced by the former owner with 2" thin wall pipe/tubing. He had attached it at each end using a U shaped bracket and the pipe was held in place with bolts. I had discovered that the bolt by the door was easily removed. When I acquired the things on my trip, I glued a foam cylinder for the upper followed by a foam cylinder for the Surefire and made a cap to seal the tube. It had taken a couple of days, but I had the time.

The contents of the pipe didn't rattle and the cap prevented anyone from seeing them. I replaced the bolt with a slightly longer one and coated all the threads with Loctite. Since I only had one pair of Vise grips, I held the head of the bolt with a crescent wrench. At that moment, we didn't have cash to buy a second pair of Vise grips. To get to the contents, you removed the bolt, dropped the pipe, used a coat hanger to pull the cap and then the Surefire. Finally, you used the same coat hanger to hook the Oasis and pull it out. I had a thing for hidden rooms, etc. every since I'd played Clue. Like I said, they couldn't find them although they almost had, by accident or design. Must have used a multitool, my toolbox was padlocked but I gave them the key when they asked. I didn't want an obstruction charge or my padlock cut off.

They couldn't have gotten the warrants without probable cause. I tried to think back to what I might have said or done to give them the PC. It was probably staring me straight in the face, but for the life of me, I couldn't figure it out. Didn't want to keep you on the edge of your seats about where the silencers were.

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I never got arrested and was never questioned again. I lay low from then on but the Vendetta I started continued. It would ebb then another drive-by would start it all over again. As far as I know, the BATFE and the FBI came up empty on the burglaries. That was my part in trying to force Obama out of office, adding another nail to his coffin by fostering civil unrest.

We sold the condo and moved to Palmdale in 2011. It was huge, 150,000 people with their own set of gangs. I wonder what would happen if...

Vendetta – Afterword

A law enforcement officer reviewed the story for me. I hadn't originally included probable cause and had to add one sentence to create it. It was something I said. I'm pretty sure the neither Surefire nor Gem-tech has such poor security that would allow an amateur to burgle their plants.

The story is reasonable in the circumstances, given the level of violence associated with gangs in Los Angeles. It is a long list and represents thousands of gang members. A bush jacket is also called a safari jacket. They have a belt and extend about 12" below the belt.

The LAPD is probably at their lowest staffing level in years. When I lived there, it took them 20 minutes to respond to a *shots fired* call and they honestly reminded me of the Keystone Kops.

For some reason, they didn't look for .50 caliber ammo a felony to possess in California as are tracer rounds. As I said there is probable cause, but I'd hate to be the one before the Judge trying to get the warrant. People do get away with murder, but don't count on it. Real life isn't like the movies. ("Sure, come in, I have nothing to hide, you can't prove a thing.")

This was just for entertainment. It's the third story I've written in response to a request and I only do them if the subject interests me. The others were USS Iowa and The Lodge.

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